



## **MINUTES**

### **BOARD OF EQUAL RIGHTS COMMISSIONERS**

**October 17, 2018 at 2:30pm**

**Room 301-A, City Hall, 200 E. Wells Street Milwaukee, WI 53202**

#### **Present:**

Commissioner Chez Ordonez, Acting Chair

Commissioner Tony Snell

Commissioner Jennifer Bennett

Commissioner Reggie Jackson

Commissioner Nathan Guequierre

Sharon Robinson, Dept. of Administration

Jessica Langill, Dept. of Administration

Patricia Ruiz-Cantu, Dept. of Administration

Rebecca Rabatin, ADA Coordinator, Dept. of Administration

Mike Peeples, Dept. of Administration

Ben Roovers, City Attorney's Office

Abril Curiel, Fair Housing Council

Nicole Angresano, United Way

Christy Brooks, United Way

Anneke Mohr, United Way

Marcia Blackman, United Way

Andrea Bernstein, Hours Against Hate

Robert Smith, Milwaukee County Human Rights Commission

The meeting was called to order at 2:36 p.m. by Commissioner Ordonez

#### ***1. Milwaukee Lifecourse Initiative for Healthy Families/LIHF – United Way (Nicole Angresano, Christy Brooks, Anneke Mohr)***

Nicole Angresano, Vice President for Community Impact, Christy Brooks, and Anneke Mohr introduced themselves. Christy Brooks stated that LIHF's goal is to reduce the death rate for black infants in the City of Milwaukee. Angresano added that the disparities between black and white infants in Milwaukee are some of the worst in the country, even worse than some third

world countries. She stated that infant mortality rates have decreased but are still critically high. Angresano stated that the community struggles with educating and raising awareness around infant mortality. She said that overwhelmingly babies are dying because they are born too small and too soon, not because of something the mom has done or things like co-sleeping. Because of this, LIHF focuses most of their resources on prematurity. Angresano stated that racism and poverty have significant impacts on the mothers that give birth to premature babies. She stated that the stress of racism is passed down from mother to child. LIHF priorities include: improving social and economic conditions for black mothers, increase awareness around family planning, and mental and physical preparedness for pregnancy.

Christy Brooks stated that the healthcare access committee, in partnership with United Way, have been working to connect high-risk women to healthcare and pregnancy services. The committee also made it so all doctors have to ask women “do you want to be pregnant in the next 12 months,” which increases intentionality in pregnancy and the time between pregnancies. The committee also works to engage fathers in issues that impact prematurity. The policy systems and environmental change committee focuses on advancing achievable policy and social determinance of health. Angresano stated that West Parklawn has been voted one of 9 Best Babies Zones in the country. This is a national recognition that it is an area with high need but also has a coalition of the willing and ready to get work done. She also mentioned the Strong Baby Campaign which is used to raise public awareness.

Anneke Mohr stated that the group has identified three recommendations: (1) prioritizing housing for pregnant women (pregnant women moved to top of list for public housing), which is being done in Boston, (2) the city should join the Government Alliance for Race and Equity (GARE), and (3) the city should support a health in all policies approach (pass an ordinance to be intentional about considering any health impacts in future policy), which has already been done in Appleton.

Commissioner Jackson stated that it would be great for the city to join GARE. He said the city needs to look at everything that we do with a racial equity lens. Commissioner Snell talked about creating a city racial equity tool which would require all departments to meet specific racial equity measurements before creating policy and programs. Commissioner Snell stated that the ERC should be able to ask the Housing Authority and other departments to come and talk about the recommendations. Commissioner Ordonez asked that the group send the asks to Jessica Langill, which can be included in the ERC’s upcoming strategic planning.

Director Robinson stated DOA is exploring joining GARE and that she would be happy to initiate conversation with the Housing Authority about the Boston model. Commissioner Snell stated he would like to send out a resolution regarding the recommendations. Commissioner Jackson requested more information about the Appleton model.

## ***2. Hours Against Hate (Andrea Bernstein)***

Andrea Bernstein stated that Hours Against Hate is an initiative out of the Jewish Federation under the Jewish Community Relations Council. The initiative focuses on creating community conversations with people who live, look, love, or pray differently from each other. She stated currently they are trying to invite workplaces and school to pledge one lunch hour per month to have these conversations. She also stated they have had a Speaker's Bureau and have put together conversation resources for the initiative.

Andrea Bernstein asked the ERC to consider hosting at least one lunch hour at City Hall as the first municipality to take part in the initiative. Commissioner Snell stated he met with Andrea a few months ago and connected her with the Milwaukee Youth Council and LGBT Community Center. He stated he suggested hosting or sponsoring a city-wide event for city employees to have a lunch hour or coffee with the conversations. He stated there is some possible grant funding to cover the cost of coffee to get the conversations started. He stated he wanted to move this as an endeavor after strategic planning.

Commissioner Ordonez asked what would need to be done to do something like this with city employees. Director Robinson said the ERC should put together a proposal and budget that could come from DOA and be vetted with DER. Commissioner Ordonez stated that the ERC would be happy to take this on and would partner with Mike Peeples on putting something together in 2019. Commissioner Jackson suggested that Andrea also reach out to the Ziedler Center for Public Discussion to find facilitators for the initiative. Commissioner Snell suggested that the ERC could also host a discussion in conjunction with an upcoming listening session.

## ***3. Milwaukee County Human Rights Commission (Dr. Robert Smith, Chair)***

Dr. Robert Smith thanked the ERC for partnering on the upcoming Human Rights Day event. He stated that over the past two months the Human Rights Commission has decided on their focus for the next couple years, which will be to start more community conversations around human rights and to connect with other similar commissions across the country to spark national discourse. He stated that he would like to work with the ERC on these goals as well.

Commissioner Snell brought up IAOHRA and suggested the County HRC look into joining. Dr. Smith stated the ERC and HRC should join forces to address core policy issues such as incarceration, policing, immigration rights, etc. Commissioner Ordonez stated that the ERC recently completed an ordinance rewrite. Dr. Smith stated the HRC is in the process of figuring out their influence within the county and what guiding ordinances that guide them. Commissioner Ordonez offered a copy of our updated ordinance and the peer city analysis that was completed. He stated that it would be good to align guiding ordinances and mission.

Commissioner Ordonez asked what the County HRC would ask of the ERC. Dr. Smith stated that an open channel of communication would be extremely useful. He also requested guidance and support for positioning themselves within the county. Commissioner Ordonez stated that it

would also be helpful to set up a meeting between the Mayor and the County Executive to talk about operations and budget for both the ERC and County HRC.

#### ***4. Black Male Achievement (Mike Peeples)***

Mike Peeples stated he will be looking into what the Black Male Achievement Council wants to pursue in the future and how they can be more intentional about the work that they do. He stated that Boys & Men of Color week just finished up last week. The planning committee that put on the BMOC week is looking forward to the work they can do together in the future. Peeples stated that one of his main goals is to raise awareness of the work that is being done in the city around black male achievement.

Peeples stated that Milwaukee Succeeds pulled together practitioners to do some strategic planning to address issues that are found in Milwaukee communities including housing, wages, and peer-to-peer mentoring. He also stated that UWM is putting on a 2019 Summit on Black Male Youth which will allow practitioners and members of the community to talk about how to engage black males. The Milwaukee Fatherhood Summit brought in new attendees and added mental health components to the summit this year. Peeples also stated that the Office of African American Affairs will open mid-fall 2019. Peeples stated that he will work in partnership with the Director of the OAAA.

Commissioner Ordonez asked how the ERC can work with Peeples to let community members know that the OAAA's resources and services will be open to all people, not just African American people. He also asked how ERC can best partner with Peeples in the future. Peeples stated that in his role he will be working to bring in more partners to make the work being done around the My Brother's Keeper Action Plan more inclusive. Commissioner Ordonez also stated that it is important for offices like the OAAA to also focus on policy.

Director Robinson stated that the financing plan for the OAAA has been approved. She also stated that no resident in the city would be turned away from the OAAA and that DOA will be doing public education to all communities in the city and that services will be available to all. Commissioner Ordonez stated that the ERC could encourage collaboration with AA men and other men of color. Commissioner Guequierre asked Peeples to provide the ERC with a list of what sorts of issues the ERC should be advocating for. Commissioner Snell also asked Peeples to provide the ERC with thoughts on how to build trust between the city and the AA community. Commissioner Ordonez stated that Peeples should provide specific questions that the ERC can add in for department reporting. Commissioner Jackson suggested that Peeples connect with the Black Holocaust Museum to use the space for community events and conversations. He stated that the BHM wants to bring attention to the great programs and initiatives within the city.

## ***5. Strategic Planning Update***

Jessica Langill stated that insurance information has been collected from BDP & Associates and that the contract has been drafted. She stated that the contract should be signed within the next week. She also stated that the Strategic Planning Committee should be meeting with Denise Patton by the end of October, early November. Langill also stated that the full Commission should be meeting for strategic planning by the end of November or early December. Commissioner Ordonez stated that the ERC would like to have recommendations or a draft plan by the end of 2018 so the Commission can move into the new year with new goals. Langill stated Denise Patton is hoping to present her strategic planning recommendations at the December meeting.

## ***6. Community Dialogue & Upcoming Events***

Patricia Ruiz-Cantu reminded the ERC that the city is still looking for poll-workers. Commissioner Ordonez stated the ERC should share a post from the election commission. Ruiz-Cantu stated that today is the last day to register early, but to remember that in Wisconsin people can also register day-of. She stated that expired licenses can be used and the address does not have to be current.

Commissioner Snell brought up the Know Your Rights event that occurred last week and said he would like to expand the conversation about the rights of immigrant communities next year. Ruiz-Cantu stated Commissioner Snell did a wonderful job representing the ERC at the event.

Rebecca Rabatin stated that she had just completed a webinar on accessible voting. She stated there is nothing in the ADA in regard to rules for early voting. She stated she will be going to early voting locations to make sure the sites are fully accessible. Commissioner Ordonez stated the ERC could work with the Election Commission to make sure accessibility is added to the checklist of what needs to be done when setting up voting. Commissioner Snell stated that the checklist also needs to include working audio translation devices for all voting locations.

Commissioner Snell stated that it is the ERC's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year. He would like to use the anniversary to increase ERC visibility and introduce the strategic plan. Commissioner Ordonez stated he would like to pass a resolution about the anniversary. He also stated he would like to repurpose the Human Rights Day Planning Committee to be the events planning committee in the future.

Commissioner Bennett stated that the Hunting Moon Pow Wow is being held at the Panther Arena all weekend long. She also stated that there will be a Dance & Wellness Event on Friday, November 9<sup>th</sup>. On Saturday November 17<sup>th</sup> the South Eastern Oneida Tribal Center is having a craft fair and soup sale. Commissioner Jackson stated he will be speaking on October 22<sup>nd</sup> at Shorewood Public Library.

**7. Next Meeting Date: TBD, City Hall**

The next meeting date has been rescheduled for Friday November 16<sup>th</sup> at 2:30pm at City Hall due to Thanksgiving.

**8. Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 4:22 p.m.

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